

**Submission  
No 21**

## **ELECTRIC AND HYBRID VEHICLE BATTERIES**

**Organisation:** Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association

**Date Received:** 24 November 2023

24 November 2023

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety,

## **AAAA Response to the NSW Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Batteries Inquiry.**

On behalf of the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association members (AAAA), we welcome the opportunity to respond to the Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Batteries Inquiry.

AAAA and its members are working closely with state government agencies to ensure access to essential infrastructure that is vital to ensuring that electric and hybrid vehicle owners have access to automotive service and repair as the uptake of electric vehicles increases.

AAAA welcomes further consultation from the committee if hearings should take place.

The Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) is the peak national industry association representing the Australian supply chain for automotive products, vehicle maintenance, repair, and modification. Our industry supports car owners after the purchase of the car, keeping vehicles safe and providing products for modification to make vehicles fit for purpose, including trade and emergency vehicles. Everything that happens to the car after the initial purchase is part of the Australian automotive aftermarket sector. We support consumers and business fleets for lengthy periods of time - when you find a trusted service provider, you normally keep them. Our members design and manufacture automotive components, distribute replacement and service parts in real-time, wholesale, import and export automotive parts and accessories, retail tools and equipment, and provide vehicle service, repair, and modification services in every community in Australia.

The AAAA is a nominating organisation on Standards Australia committees covering a wide range of parts and accessories, tools and equipment and our member representatives are actively involved in the development of product quality standards. The AAAA and our member companies passionately defend the reputation and integrity of the independent aftermarket and stand by our products and professionalism.

### [Automotive Industry – Employee Health and Safety](#)

As the peak industry body that represents automotive workers specifically those working in service and repair many of our members undertake work on Electric and Hybrid vehicles daily. It is important to note that to gain access to vital diagnostic and service information on both electric and hybrid vehicles, light vehicle technicians are required to complete the certified unit: AURETH101 – Depower And Reinitialise Battery Electric Vehicles.

### [Our Industry is Investing in EV Safety](#)

A recent study commissioned by AAAA found that despite the low levels of EVs in operation, currently 33% of automotive service and repair workshops now have at least one technician within the workshop trained to *depower and reinitialize hybrid and electric vehicles* with another 44% planning to undertake formal training in the next 36 months. A further 10% of workshops have already completed advanced training and competency units in EV servicing and fault diagnosis.

Our EV Future Ready survey revealed and demonstrated an industry that is already gearing up for EV take-up by investing in training and equipment in order to be ready for the new market conditions and technologies.<sup>1</sup>

#### [AURSS00064 – Battery Electric Vehicle Inspection and Servicing Skill Set and AURSS00037 – Hybrid Electric Vehicle Inspection and Servicing Skill Set](#)

##### DESCRIPTION

This course covers the fundamental requirements for inspecting and servicing battery electric vehicle (BEV) and hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) systems and components in the automotive retail, service, and repair industry.

##### ACCREDITED UNITS

AURETH101 – Depower and reinitialize battery electric vehicles.

AURETH102 – Inspect and maintain battery electric vehicles.

AURETH103 – Diagnose and repair high voltage rechargeable energy storage systems in battery electric vehicles.

AURETH107 – Diagnose and repair system instrumentation and safety interlocks in battery electric vehicles.

AURETH010 – Diagnose and repair high voltage rechargeable energy storage systems in hybrid electric vehicles.

AURETH011 – Depower and reinitialise hybrid electric vehicles.

AURETH012 – Service and maintain electrical components in hybrid electric vehicles.

<sup>1</sup> Future Readiness Index AAAA & Fifth Quadrant October 2023 <<https://www.aaaa.com.au/industry-advocacy/future-readiness-index>>

While many of our workshops have employees trained in AURETH101, for those wanting to undertake this unit and more advanced competency units, finding availability can be a challenge. As Electric and Hybrid vehicle intake grows, we find more outer suburban and regional workshops wanting to enrol to be prepared for the future EV customer base. This desire to invest in our future is certainly resulting in additional pressure on the training system to meet demand and we are seeing an increase in wait lists for these courses.

### [Risks to Emergency Service Workers](#)

AAAA acknowledges that emergency service workers are not required to have this same level of training and we believe that this presents a more significant risk, especially when operating in a time-critical environment that does not occur in a workshop. These risks are markedly different from those associated with traditional internal combustion engine vehicles, primarily due to the high-voltage batteries used in EVs. While training is vital for first responders, AAAA also calls on major car manufacturers to make information packs available in full as well as create simple easy to understand emergency responder packs.

### [The Risk of EV Battery Storage In Workshops](#)

In addressing the challenges posed by batteries in electric and hybrid vehicles, the AAAA emphasise the importance of specific and robust safety and risk management strategies. While training and education mitigate the risk of any injury due to undertaking work when the electric or hybrid vehicle is 'powered'. Our members are concerned about the increased risk that may arise with improper storage and care of high-voltage batteries. These batteries, if not managed correctly, can pose a serious hazard including the risk of fire or chemical leaks.

One point that has been raised by members is issues surrounding the disposal/recycling of batteries when they are nearing the end of life. The lack of collection sites for batteries means that some workshops have to store batteries on-site for longer periods than they would otherwise prefer to wait for transportation.

AAAA would like to see this process become more efficient for workshops. Our primary responsibility is the maintenance, servicing and repairing of vehicles, and the embedded expertise required for battery storage is not necessarily a skills set that exists within the auto repair sector. From early-stage consultation with members, we would like to see more sites (especially in regional areas) made available for the collection of batteries. These sites would need to vary in scale to meet local demand, but this would provide our members with more assurance that they do not need to keep batteries on site as they wait for transportation to be coordinated.

### [The Adequacy of Training And Equipment For Workers In The Automotive Industry](#)

The training that is currently provided and being pursued by the automotive industry is of high quality and enables workshops and workers to upskill at a pace suitable for their

business. The multiple courses available to the industry also provide pathways for those who want to specialise in electric and hybrid vehicles while also providing base-level knowledge for workshops to carry out vital service and repair. However, issues arise concerning access to training, especially in regional areas where there can be less opportunity to undertake this training without expensive and time-consuming travel to central and suburban areas.

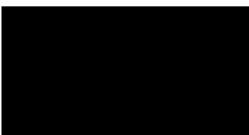
The AAAA believes that there is more opportunity to increase the accessibility of training for light and heavy vehicle technicians in regional areas. It's imperative that training facilities and resources are distributed more evenly across the country to ensure that no workshop, regardless of location, is disadvantaged. This is not only important for the upskilling of our workforce but also crucial for maintaining the safety standards necessary for working with electric and hybrid vehicles.

### Concluding Remarks

We appreciate this opportunity to contribute to the inquiry and are keen to engage in further discussions and collaborations. Our goal is to ensure both the safety of our automotive technicians and to ensure that owners of electric and hybrid vehicles continue to receive the high-quality service our members' workshops provide.

We believe that with the right support and resources, we can effectively manage the transition to these newer vehicle technologies while maintaining the safety and reliability standards that are the backbone of our industry.

Sincerely,



**Lesley Yates**

**Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA)**



[www.aaa.com.au](http://www.aaa.com.au)